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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**July's First Friday at Ocean City Center for the Arts
is free and open to the public**

OCEAN CITY, MD — July 3, 2023 — The Art League of Ocean City invites the public to five new art shows opening on First Friday, July 7, 2023, 5-7 p.m., at the Ocean City Center for the Arts, 94th St. bayside. Admission is free with complimentary beverages sponsored by PKS Investments and hors d'oeuvres sponsored by Surf House Properties.

The Thaler Gallery hosts an exhibition by Evan Fitzgerald of Berlin, Md. entitled "Persona." Fitzgerald paints on wood panels and allows the surface of the wood to remain visible with transparent paint. The word persona is rooted in the Latin word for a theatrical mask. Carl Jung described persona as a social mask with different masks for different settings. Fitzgerald's paintings obscure the subject's face so their headaddresses are the focal point with the individual a pedestal for displaying these objects.

The annual Beverly Bassford Memorial Juried Group Show fills the walls of the Sisson Galleria in July. After Bassford's death in 1999, her family honored her love of art by establishing a prize in her name that grew into the annual show, with continued sponsorship by the family. Elvin Hernandez, professor of art at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, juried the show and selected the winners, who will be awarded cash prizes during the reception on First Friday.

Studio E features Susan Hunsberger of Laurel, De. Her focus is primarily mixed media using acrylic and colored pencil with add fabric collage. "Using the collage gives me the freedom to break free and play with color and design,"

Hunsberger said. She is influenced by poster art, particularly Mucha and Peter Max, stained glass design, and portrait art of the past.

Sheryl Pond of Ocean View, De. is the Spotlight Gallery artist for July. Calling herself an “art journalist” who focuses on what gives her joy, she fills journals with doodles, watercolors, drawings and sketches, playing with insects and butterflies, modifying sizes, shapes, and body colors to suit her whimsy.

Pat Fecko of Millville, De. shows her artwork in the Artisan Showcase in July. She works mainly in watercolors and has received numerous awards for her artwork.

The artwork of Emil Markulis continues showing in the Staircase Gallery.

Art shows at the Art League’s satellite galleries are all new in July. Debbi Dean of Berlin, Md. exhibits her work at the Coffee Beanery on 94th St. and Coastal Hwy. The abstract, mixed media, and pyrography artist is a hunter/gatherer by nature, searching for found objects such as feathers, shells, sea glass, wood, or any discarded item to use in her work.

Barbara Stepura of White Plains, Md. opens a show of paintings in the Princess Royale lobby, 9100 Coastal Hwy. She enjoys painting “en plein air” as a lover of the outdoors and finds the experience of translating her view of nature to canvas captivating.

The Art League of Ocean City is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting artistic expression and appreciation for the creative arts in our community through education, exhibits, scholarship, programs, and community art projects. Funding is provided in part by the Worcester County Arts Council, Maryland State Arts Council, and the National Endowment of the Arts, organizations dedicated to cultivating a vibrant cultural community where the arts thrive.

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EDITORS: Photo attached of Evan Fitzgerald.

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